

1. (Persephone's Return from the) Dark Fold of the Night

I heard you bore your daughter
From the dark fold of the night
She came like water
Upon your winds of life

To awake, and in the fire of spring
The winter garment of repentance fling
This bird of time has but a little way to fly
And she is on the wing

Here is the gate, the garden path
The children at the door
The rising bread, the fireplace
The sunshine on the floor

Here is the dark, wild cavern's mouth
The mouth, the voice, the cry
Two lonely feet, a pair of hands
That reach out for the sky

Here is the other half of light
That draws its shape from shade
And here the other face of birth
That grows in death's decay

Here is the ever-changing spoke
Upon life's spiral ride
No sooner has she found her form
Than she begins to die

I heard you bore your daughter
From the dark fold of the night



Persephone
John William Waterhouse

* Chorus adapted from a verse of the *Rubiyat* of Omar Khayyam



Like the birth of a child, the birth of the self is accompanied by pain: the process of opening the gates to a new life takes us to the limits of our endurance. I wrote this song when my children were young, and although I was fully engaged in motherhood, I was, at the same time, struggling to stay within the container of normal life: my mind was leading me to dark and dangerous places. The contrast between those two realities – the home in the second verse and the cavern in the third verse – was almost unbearable. How to stay within the sweet, simplicity of daily life while being dragged, unwillingly, into a psychological underworld? The answer that came to me is expressed in the fourth and fifth verses: the two realities are, in fact, one. There is no light without darkness. We cannot live without consuming life – the very soil from which we eat is made from the bodies of the dead. Persephone must go to the Underworld in order to return, each year, with Spring.

